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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this guide is to assist trained data collectors in the use of the "Performance-Based Counselor Certification Model for the State of Georgia." The guidelines are intended to clarify the process rather than to limit the data collector to a confining set of definitions. In addition, the guide discusses specific school counselor competencies and tells the data collector what to look for. The six competencies included are planning, individual counseling, group facilitating, consulting, in-service training and information processing. The data collection training process utilizes a six-day workshop format which is designed to provide data collectors with information and experiences necessary to follow the process. The training emphasizes the ability to recognize and rate the indicators of competency in the performance-based certification model. The guide is a supplement to the "Counselor Performance Assessment" book. (Author/LEB)

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DATA COLLECTORS GUIDE

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DATA COLLECTORS GUIDE

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to assist trained data collectors in the use of the Performance-Based Counselor Certification Model for the State of Georgia. Counselors and counselor educators who have used and reviewed the materials have contributed to the guidelines delineated in the sections that follow. The guidelines are intended to clarify the process rather than to limit the data collector to a confining set of definitions. As the user studies the six competencies, the instruments and the guidelines he or she should continue to ask, "What is sufficient performance of this skill or indicator?" The guidelines should contribute to the process.

Included in the following sections are:

- A description of the data collection process,
- General guidelines for data collectors, and
- Specific guidelines for the use of the instruments in each of the six competency areas.

Please read these sections and append additional notes or guidelines. Discuss them with counselors and other data collectors.

It is important to keep in mind that this guide is designed to supplement the materials received through the formal data collection training process and those instructions

found in the Counselor Performance Assessment book. References made in this guide always refer to information found in the Counselor Performance Assessment book.

The data collection training process utilizes a six day workshop format which is designed to provide data collectors with information and experiences necessary to follow the process. The training emphasizes the ability to recognize and rate the indicators of competency in the performance-based certification model.

II. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Data collection is the process used to obtain evidence of sufficient or insufficient performance by counselor candidates of the skills and indicators grouped under each of six competency areas which are critical to the success of Georgia's school counselors. The process, which may take up to three years to complete, includes three steps:

- Initial contact between the counselor and the data collector
- Administration and compilation of the instruments contained in each of six competency modules
- Delivery of the completed instruments to the person responsible for assessment of the forms.

Initial Contact

The initial contact between the counselor and the data collector may be initiated by either party. The contact should occur early in the counselor's first year of service and the counselor should be encouraged to begin in the certification process immediately. During this first meeting it is advisable for the two parties to set up a tentative schedule of data collection activities that

will assist the counselor in completing the process in less than two years. Many counselors will want to begin with the planning module, but they may choose to proceed through the modules in any order. The data collector may want to suggest sources of assistance to counselors who feel uncertain about any of the skills or competencies. A "trial run" may be requested by a counselor who wants to test his or her skill prior to the actual data collection session.

Administration and Compilation of Data Collection Instruments

Throughout the six modules the data collector will find that various types of instruments are to be utilized. They are:

- Observation forms for live or video tape demonstrations
- Listening forms for audio tape demonstrations
- Rating scales
- Checklists for the counselor's clients
- Self-evaluation forms for the counselor to complete.

Each module contains some of these types of instruments.

When the counselor indicates his/her readiness (or when the data collector urges it) for data collection in a given module, the data collector distributes check lists

to persons indicated in the module. Concurrently he or she administers those forms which the data collector completes during observations or review of materials. When all forms in a given module are finished, they are submitted together to the data assessor.

Although only one data collector is required, it may prove useful for two data collectors to work together and then, using the data they have recorded, complete one set of forms. This procedure may facilitate objectivity. In any case, the data collector will want to make some brief notes on the forms to indicate why a rating of insufficient has been selected especially in cases where some value judgments were necessary.

In modules 2-5 where the counselor is required to demonstrate a set of skills live, on video tape or on audio tape, the counselor and data collector may agree (based on experienced users of the materials) that a live demonstration is preferable. In this case the live demonstration must be agreed to by participants or clients.

Delivery of Completed Instruments

When all forms in a given module are complete, they should be placed in a folder bearing the candidate's name and address and the data collector's name and address. The folder is submitted to the assessor who will tabulate and score the forms and make the necessary recommendations to the candidate.

III. General Guidelines

The data collector is an experienced counselor who is thoroughly familiar with the instruments and other materials contained within the certification model. It is strongly recommended that he or she go through the model on his/her own or with the aid of a peer to ensure familiarity and thorough understanding. Other general guidelines recommend that the data collector:

- Distinguish between data collection and evaluation. The task is to record information but not to interpret implications.
- Be thoroughly familiar with the process and the specific indicators in each module.
- Be as objective as possible. Inevitably some items on the instrument require the data collector to make inferences, but at all times be aware of what behaviors you are seeing or hearing that are influencing your rating. Make notes where necessary and try to avoid value judgments.
- Focus on the data collection task.
- Avoid telling the candidate what he or she should or should not do during a demonstration.

- Be friendly; put the candidate at ease.
- Move into an observation quickly and courteously and in a non-threatening manner; move out as soon as possible.
- Avoid conducting data collection for a close, personal associate.
- Explain to the candidate that the data collector's role is not to provide either support or criticism. Refrain from comments on the observation that may lead the candidate to assume he or she has been positively or negatively evaluated.

IV. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR DATA COLLECTORS

A. Planning

The planning module is likely to be the first competency module undertaken by the counselor. It may be, and perhaps should be, started prior to the beginning of the school year so that up to a full year may be used to complete it. The module requires the counselor to submit a Planning File containing numerous documents. Each document should be placed in a separate folder and coded using the number/letter system found on Instrument I-1. Some additional description of the items in the Planning File follows. Refer to Section I, pages 14 to 15 as you read.

Indicators

1. At least 1 of each instrument (a-c) must be included. They must be appropriate for the audience served. They must be ready for use (as opposed to notes or outlines).
2. The instruments (a-c) need not be related; they may be appropriate for various audiences or purposes. They must be ready for use.
4. Items 4 and 12 are related. Item 12 requires the counselor to monitor his/her programs. Item 4 requires that the counselor provide evidence that he/she can <u>use</u> the data collected under

Item 12. The question is, "if the counselor monitors the programs she or he institutes, does he or she use the evaluation data to refine the programs?"

5. This item requires the counselor to show evidence that he/she is able to obtain data on local school/community problems or conditions affecting students.
6. Formally and informally collected data may be submitted. Data from students, staff, and parents must be included.
7. This item requires the counselor to set program priorities, to estimate time or actual financial resources that will be assigned to each and to explain why the priorities were selected. 6c should reflect the counselor's consideration of the school's guidance policies and the school's goals.
8. The plan should show how the counselor will interface with and be supportive to the staff.
9. The plan should show how the counselor intends to provide services to students as indiviuals and groups.
10. The plan should include orientation activities as well as services to be provided to parents.

11. The policy statement should be thorough, clearly written and ready for distribution to clients.

12. This item seeks evidence that the candidate monitors the programs he/she initiates. It may include a log of activities or results of client surveys. It may be both formal and informal. To be adequate, the monitoring systems need to provide the counselor on-going data about the programs he/she is conducting so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified.

13. The follow-up report on students should be detailed enough for school personnel to make generalizations about types of career or life options being chosen by graduates.

B. Individual Counseling

Individual counseling skills are often a product of personality and philosophy as well as a result of training. In observing or listening to a counseling session, the data collector should be careful not to be biased toward or against a particular style or school of thought. Try to focus on the specific indicators listed on the rating forms. Note that Instrument II-1 asks you to direct your attention

to non-verbal behavior while Instrument II-2 is attentive to verbal behavior.

The counseling module requires the candidate to perform three counseling demonstrations - one in the form of a role-play and two with actual clients. Some additional descriptions of the indicators of skill in counseling follow. Refer to Section II, page 27 as you read.

Indicators

1. The counselor may use verbal and/or non-verbal cues to put the student at ease. He/she should be sensitive to the client's comfort or lack of it and should refrain opening the session prematurely. If the student is comfortable and ready to begin, a simple greeting may suffice.
2. If the purpose of the session is either stated or self-evident, the item should be rated "yes."
3. Indicators of effective listening may be verbal or non-verbal and may include posture, eye contact, gesturing, nodding, or commenting.
4. In being attentive, the counselor should avoid changing the subject at an inappropriate time or failing to follow-up statements made by the student. The counselor should respond to apparent signs of physical discomfort.

5. The counselor avoids interrupting the student and uses verbal or non-verbal cues to encourage free communication.
6. The student should be given time to think and to respond, but the counselor should avoid encouraging wandering when a more effective and efficient (or directive) approach is necessary.
7. The counselor behaves in a manner that tells the student he or she is OK. Too much physical distance between counselor and client or physical barriers placed between counselor and client are inappropriate.
8. The counselor addresses the client verbally and non-verbally in a respectful manner.
9. The counselor refrains from making value judgments, registering disapproval.
10. Regardless of the nature of the client's problem, the counselor should maintain interest. He or she keeps the conversation focussed and verbally indicates concern for the individual.
11. The counselor helps the student identify options for problem resolution. If only one option is stated, and it meets the client's need, this is sufficient. If the session does not reach a stage where options can be identified, the rating should be "NA."

12. Time should be allowed for the client to make decisions. But time should not be wasted. When a decision is reached, the session is brought to a close. If the counselor fails to close a session that is rambling needlessly an "insufficient" rating should result.

13. If the client needs specific information, the counselor should provide clear and accurate information. If the client's questions are evaded, the rating should be "insufficient." If no opportunity for providing information arises, the rating should be "NA."

14. The session should be brought to a close in an appropriate manner and at an appropriate time in the discussion. The client should not be "left up in the air" nor should the client be detained needlessly.

C. Group Facilitating

The group facilitation module requires the counselor to conduct three group sessions. The first (Instrument III-1) is with a new group, one that has met previously no more than three times. During this session the data collector observes the candidate's facilitating skills and some skills that are especially important in establishing new groups. In the second and third demonstrations (Instrument III-2) the counselor is working with a group which is experienced and with which he or she feels comfortable. During these sessions attention is given both to the counselor's facilitating skills and to group skills acquired by the clients.

Some additional description of the indicator of skill in group facilitating follows. Refer to Section III, pages 40 and 41 as you read.

Indicators

1. The purpose of the session may be stated or implied. The counselor should receive a "sufficient" rating if it is evident that group members understand the session's purpose.
2. Item 2 requires that the group be involved in the planning of this or future sessions. They should be consulted as to options for achieving the goals. Agreement to a previously prepared plan is sufficient if the negotiations are open.

3. As part of the orientation process the counselor should state the rules or procedures to be used and/or should elicit them from the group.
4. Trust building strategies may include games, warm-up discussions, personal sharing or other activities intended to build confidence in the process and task confronting the group members. Sharing reasons for participation in the group may be an appropriate strategy.
5. The counselor should not discourage attempts at expression. Participants are treated equally.
6. The counselor remains involved, verbally or non-verbally throughout the session.
7. All points of view are treated as views open to discussion. The counselor should avoid taking sides in discussion.
8. The counselor should be aware of students who are not participating and should take advantage of opportunities to involve them.
9. If the discussion wanders or is stymied, the counselor should intervene to aid the discussion. If no opportunity to facilitate occurs, the item is rated "NA."

10. If a student's views are not clearly expressed or if other students are not understanding those views, the counselor should offer clarification. If no opportunity to clarify occurs, the item is rated "NA."

11. When appropriate the counselor will encourage the group to evaluate the effectiveness of their group process.

12. When one, or more, student is blocking the group process through domination, inappropriate use of humor, hostility, non-cooperation or other means, the group should be encouraged to identify those behaviors and to discuss them. If no such opportunity occurs, the item is rated "NA."

13. When one, or more, student has been helpful to the group process by encouraging others to speak, by cooperating, by offering useful information, by supporting group members or by other means, the group should be encouraged to identify those behaviors and to discuss them. If no such opportunity occurs, the item is rated "NA."

14. When appropriate the counselor asks the group to assess the role he or she has played.

15. The counselor brings closure to the session by summarizing the task and process.

16. In at least one of the group sessions the counselor must use at least one group method to facilitate the task or process. The method should be recorded on Form III-1 or III-2, as indicated.

17. Clients refrain from interrupting or ignoring one another.

18. Clients encourage each other to talk.

19. Clients are willing to state their problems or concerns.

20. Clients are willing to express their feelings.

21. Clients are willing to express disagreement with others and with the group process.

22. Clients follow through on action plans resulting from group work and share these plans when appropriate. Time is provided for sharing.

D. Consulting

Consulting is defined in this module as a service to parents or school staff which is directed toward resolving or avoiding a school-related or student-related problem. A consultation is initiated by the client or clients who seek assistance in addressing the problem. Consulting

sessions, generally, focus on problem identification, information sharing and action planning. (Clients are not in a personal crisis situation.)

In demonstrating skill in consulting the counselor is working with teachers, administrators, and parents during two consulting sessions. Some additional description of the indicators of skill in consultation follows. Refer to Section IV, pages 59 and 60 as you read.

Indicators

1. The counselor follows-up on client comments and facilitates problem identification, problem clarification, and problem resolution.
2. When clients indicate difficulty in expressing ideas or those ideas are not being understood, the counselor should use questions or other means to clarify the communication. If no such opportunity arises, the item is rated "NA."
3. Regardless of the nature of the problem the counselor expresses concern and a willingness to help.
4. The counselor avoids making value judgments.
5. The tone of the session should be a comfortable peer-to-peer exchange. The parties are working collaboratively to share skills and information in order to take appropriate actions. (This may not apply to students, if involved.)

6. Especially in the early stages of the consulting relationship the counselor should focus on problem clarification. Information concerning the client's problem must come from the client. The counselor should not move the discussion forward until all parties are clear as to the problem they are addressing.
7. The counselor asks the clients to try to identify the reasons why they feel the problem exists.
8. The hypotheses concerning the problem are analyzed and discussed.
9. The counselor must determine whether or not the client is really interested in helping to resolve the problem. If this is not clear, it must be discussed and not assumed. Further action depends on an understanding of what the client is willing to do. If the teacher wants the student removed from his/her class, for example, the counselor will take action that differs from strategies that would be used with a teacher who is willing to work with the student.
10. The counselor clearly states what he or she is able or unable to contribute to the problem.

11. When the problem is identified the counselor directs the discussion toward planning for some action. A decision not to take action or a decision that others must be brought into the consultation is sufficient if those decisions seem appropriate.

12. The counselor must indicate that he/she has followed the client to determine if further assistance is necessary.

13-25. Items 13-25 are indicators of the counselor's willingness to make his/her services available to staff and parents. It is incumbent upon the counselor to make his/her services known to clients, whether or not they seek to use those services.

E. In-service Training

The fifth module requires that the counselor conduct one training session involving school staff. The plan for the session may be the one submitted in the Planning File (see module I) or it may be another plan. Some additional description of the indicators of skill in training follows. Refer to Section V, pages 76 and 77 as you read.

Indicators

1. The space must be arranged to facilitate the purpose of the session. For example, a lecture might require seats facing forward; an exercise in interpersonal skills would require small group arrangements where people can see and hear one another. Physical limitations of space which are beyond the counselor's control should not influence a negative rating.
2. The counselor says why the session is being held and what, in general, will be accomplished.
3. It should be stated by the counselor that he/she has conducted an assessment to determine the need of participants for training or that the need was determined using other data. A needs assessment may be conducted informally or formally as part of the session.
4. The objectives of the session are stated orally or are distributed in writing.
5. Any materials, media, activities, employed by the trainer must be appropriate to the audience and clearly related to the objectives of the session.

6. Effective training sessions are a blend of presentation, discussion, activity and opportunities to practice new skills or test knowledge. Timing is important. If the audience is "lost", the trainer must respond.
7. It should be evident that the trainer is aiming to accomplish the task; to achieve the objectives.
8. It should be evident that the trainer is sensitive to the group process. Participants may be asked to assess the process or to suggest ways the group might work together. Participants are encouraged to talk.
9. Some personal, active information is necessary in training. Activities may include reading, writing, discussing, role-playing, demonstrating skills or other involving actions.
10. The trainer verbally or non-verbally reinforces participants as they learn or acquire skills. Reinforcement may come through materials stressing self-evaluation by participants.
11. The counselor is responsive to expressed (or otherwise communicated) needs of participants. This may range from needs for information, to needs for adjustment in room temperature.

12. At the conclusion of the session or at points throughout the trainer will measure participant progress through observation, rating, paper-pencil testing or other objective means.

13. The counselor should assess, formally or informally, participants' reactions to the training. He or she will assess such factors as clarity of objectives, appropriateness of activities, usefulness of session, use of time, needs met and unmet.

14. Closure should include a verbal summary and a statement of follow-up services, materials or activities that will be available to participants.

F. Information Processing

Information processing includes skill in referral, pupil appraisal and resource management. In this module the counselor prepares an information file and is also expected to provide evidence that his/her resources and services are accessible to clients.

Performance of this competency may be greatly influenced by two factors: the size of the community and the extensiveness of resources already in the school and available to the counselor.

A school in a small rural community may have limited access to outside agencies and resources while a school serving a larger community may need to be selective in the choice of agencies and resources it utilizes. Neither condition, alone, should cause a negative rating.

Many schools having well developed counseling programs may have extensive information files already prepared for the counselor's use. On the other hand, a new counselor may be entering a school where no such resources have been provided. The data collector should discuss this factor with the candidate and weigh the information accordingly. A sufficient rating may be achieved even if the counselor has not had to develop the information system personally. Similarly a sufficient rating may be achieved if the candidate is in the process of developing the information file which, due to limited funds, may not yet be extensive.

Each document in the Information File should be submitted in separate folders and coded using the number/letter system found on Instrument VI-1.

Some additional description of the indicators of skill in information processing follows. Refer to Section VI, pages 90 to 92 as you read.

1-5. These items are written referral documents which are to be included in the Information File and which are described more thoroughly in Instrument VI-1.

6-12. These items are tasks which the counselor must perform in order to maintain a sound referral system. These indicators are rated by the counselor's colleagues.

13-15. These items are written pupil appraisal documents which are to be included in the Information File and which are described more thoroughly on Instrument VI-1.

16-18. These items are tasks which the counselor must perform in order to maintain the pupil appraisal system. These indicators are rated by the counselor's colleagues.

19-28. These items are written documents (various print resources) which are to be included in the Information File and which are described more thoroughly on Instrument VI-1.

29-33. These items are tasks which the counselor must perform in order to maintain a resource file. These indicators are rated by the counselor's colleagues.